

LOWELL WOMEN'S WEEK

1996-2005

*A Decade of Promoting Women's
Safety, Prosperity and Spirit*





Over the past 10 years, these have been the themes, the dedications, and just some of the highlights of each year:

1996 *Anything Is Possible: Women's Past, Present & Future*

Dedicated to a vision of our city and our world as a place free from family violence

1997 *Women in the Commonwealth: Diversity Is Our Strength*

Dedicated to the memory of Yvonne Dunkley

- 1st annual opening breakfast
- 1st annual *Girls with Goals* Conference

1998 *Cultivating Community: Diverse Paths & Common Goals*

- 1st Women's Week Folk Music Concert
- Donations collected for Alternative House & for *SuitAbility*

1999 *Exploring Our Possibilities: Personal, Professional & Political*

- Leslea Newman, author of *Heather Has Two Mommies*, "Homophobia, Family Values & Censorship"

2000 *Women in the New Millennium: Looking Back, Moving Forward*

Dedicated with thanks to Carol Bond

- 1st Public Art Project, "2,000 Wishes of Women"

2001 *Every Woman Makes A Difference: Together We Change the World*

- 1st "Because of Her..." awards
- 1st "Celebrating Ourselves as We Age" Crowning Ceremony
- Public Art Project: "Because of Her..."

2002 *Women Across Cultures: Surviving & Thriving in an Uncertain World*

- *Because of Her* award dedicated to the memory of Mary Bacigalupo
- 1st UMass Lowell V-Day College Campaign: student performance of Eve Ensler's *The Vagina Monologues* raises \$12,000 for programs focused on violence against women
- Public Art Project echoes 9/11 realities: "Shoes: Stepping into an uncertain world"

2003 *Nourishing Our Spirit, Inspiring Our Dreams*

- Girls' Inc., *Photo Voice* Exhibit
- Public Art Project: "Food: 'bake it 'til it's done'"

2004 *Creating a Just World: Voices, Choices and Connections*

- *Because of Her* award dedicated to the memory of Susan Leggat
- Public Art Project: "With these hands..."

2005 *Hats Off to a Decade of Promoting Women's Safety, Prosperity & Spirit*

- *Dedicated with thanks to Audrey Ambrosino*
- Public Art Project: "We all wear many hats"

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BIRTHDAY

On March 2, 1996, the mayor of Lowell, Edward C. Caulfield, proclaimed the first Lowell Women's Week. Although programs celebrating International Women's Day (March 8) and National Women's History Month (March) had been offered in the city during the preceding years, March 2, 1996 marked the official beginning of a new collaboration:

...This year in the City of Lowell, University of Massachusetts at Lowell, Middlesex Community College, the National Park Service, the Police Department and a variety of other organizations from across the city have planned city-wide events, beginning this afternoon at the New England Quilt Museum, honoring women throughout the week.

(Proclamation, March 2, 1996)

Seventeen organizations were represented on the planning committee, and 18 programs—exhibits, discussions, lectures, receptions, and fairs—were offered to the public without charge. Women and girls came together to share their cultural traditions, their scholarly, professional and community achievements, their vital concerns and their amazing creativity.

GROWING AND CREATING

Since that first year, Lowell Women's Week has created and sponsored more than 270 programs—from just 18 events the first year to over 40 in 2003. Though tremendously varied, most events have focused on diversity issues, arts and culture, social issues, women's networking, women's history or a combination of these. In addition to these numerous events, the Lowell Women's Week planning committee as a group initiated two special projects: *The Because of Her* awards and the Public Art Project.

The annual *Because of Her* awards recognize women who have exhibited extraordinary leadership, commitment and courage; and have significantly changed the lives of others through kindness, generosity, compassion and activism. The award is intended for women whose contributions have not been publicly recognized. They are given to women and teens for long-term or emerging leadership.



Lowell Women's Week is a yearly celebration of the lives of women and girls in this city. Organized by an all-volunteer planning committee, with events sponsored by many of the City's agencies and organizations, Lowell Women's Week highlights the work, struggles, hopes and achievements of Lowell's women and girls.

Hundreds of women and girls have participated in the Public Art Projects. These projects give women and girls an opportunity for self-expression, and make women's lives prominently visible in the city. From professional art work to kindergarten creations, public art work has been displayed in the windows of downtown businesses and in other exhibit places during Lowell Women's Week.

SUSTAINING COMMUNITY

Lowell Women's Week has intentionally included women and girls from throughout the city. Women from diverse cultures have shared their cultural traditions and experiences. Young girls have expressed their perspectives, and older women have celebrated their lives. Students at the city's high schools and colleges have collaborated with one another and with community groups. Strong, flexible bridges have been built among women as Lowell Women's Week continues to work for active engagement in public discourse and community building, designed to encourage individual growth and enrich the social fabric.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Open to all community members, the planning committee is a fluid and welcoming network of women who live, work and go to school in Lowell and the region. More than 70 organizations have been represented on the committee, from small local groups to national organizations.

Lowell Women's Week is not an incorporated organization and has no designated officers. It is simply a group of people who meet each year to plan and present Lowell Women's Week. Each organization, individually or in collaboration with other groups, presents one or more events focused on the lives of women and girls. Each year's programming reflects the creativity, priorities and outreach of many individuals and institutions in the city.

HATS OFF TO LOWELL WOMEN'S WEEK!

Lowell Women's Week has brought women and girls together to tell our life stories, celebrate our successes, and advocate for ourselves, our families, and our shared community and world.

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The idea for this history came from the Lowell Women's Week Planning Committee. The text and history were written by Anne Mulvey, a founding committee member and Professor of Psychology at UMass Lowell. Support for this brochure was provided by the UMass Lowell Council on Diversity and Pluralism.